

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: SENIOR ISRAELI OFFICIAL VISITS ROMANIA

REF: BUCHAREST 0038

SUMMARY: PROFESSOR SHLOMO AVINERI, DIRECTOR GENERAL (AND NUMBER TWO)
OF THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY, ARRIVED IN BUCHAREST JANUARY 5
ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO ROMANIA. THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF
HIS VISIT, WHICH WILL INCLUDE A MEETING WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER MACOVESCU, IS TO CONTINUE ISRAEL'S POLICY OF
FOSTERING RELATIONS WITH ROMANIA. AVINERI ALSO EXPECTS TO
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BE BRIEFED ON RECENT VISITS TO BUCHAREST BY THE SYRIAN
PRIME MINISTER AND BY PLO LEADER ARAFAT. END SUMMARY.

1. BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE AVINERI SAID THAT HE WOULD
BE DISCUSSING THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AND EXPECTS TO BE
BRIEFED ON THE VISITS OF SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER KHLEIFAWI
AND ARAFAT. HE WOULD ALSO BE DISCUSSING POINTS OVER WHCCH

THERE WAS A DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ROMANIA, SUCH AS THE STATUS OF THE PLO, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK, AND THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

2. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, AVINERI SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO GET ISRAEL-AIDED AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS PAST THE DISCUSSION STAGE, WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN FOR THE LAST YEAR. THESE PROJECTS INCLUDE AGRO-TECHNICAL AND IRRIGATION SCHEMES, A FERTILIZER PROCESSING PLANT, A BROMIDE PLANT AND A CATTLE BREEDING IMPROVEMENT PLAN. ANOTHER RELATED TOPIC IS EXPECTED TO BE THE TRADE BALANCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ROMANIA, WHICH IS NOW IN ISRAEL'S FAVOR.

3. AVINERI SAID HE WOULD RAISE THE SUBJECT OF IMMIGRATION OF ROMANIAN JEWS TO ISRAEL, AND WOULD GIVE A LECTURE ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AT BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY.

4. IN DISCUSSING THE AVINERI VISIT JANUARY 5, MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL EVRON TOLD THE CHARGE' THAT THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL-ROMANIA VISITS WENT BACK A NUMBER OF YEARS, TO A PERIOD WHEN GIDEON RAFAEL AND MACOVESCU WERE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. AT THAT TIME THEY HAD AGREED THAT HIGH-LEVEL VISITS SHOULD TAKE PLACE EVERY SIX MONTHS, BUT WHEN THEY MOVED TO OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES (MACOVESCU TO BECOME FOREIGN MINISTER AND RAFAEL TO BECOME AMBASSADOR TO LONDON) THE ARRANGEMENT LAPSED. THE ROMANIANS HAD INDICATED AN INTEREST IN RENEWING THESE VISITS, AND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PACOSTA HAD COME TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISRAEL SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. WHILE HERE HE HAD INVITED AVINERI TO VISIT ROMANIA; EVRON SAID HE ASSUMES THAT THE RENEWED RHYTHM OF VISITS WILL CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ISRAELIS ANTICIPATE LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE OUTCOME FROM AVINERI'S TALKS IN ROMANIA BECAUSE ALL ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD BEEN COVERED IN A MEETING BETWEEN MACOVESCU AND FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON DURING THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LAST FALL.

5. COMMENT: ISRAEL IS CAREFUL TO CULTIVATE ITS TIES WITH BUCHAREST AS A MEANS OF SHOWING THAT A COMMUNIST COUNTRY, FRIENDLY WITH THE ARABS, IS CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING REGULAR AND POSITIVE TIES WITH ISRAEL AS WELL, WITHOUT ITS INTERESTS BEING AFFECTED. IN ADDITION, ISRAEL HAS A STRONG INTEREST IN MAINTAINING AND INCREASING THE FLOW OF ROMANIAN JEWS TO THIS COUNTRY AND WILL DO WHATEVER IT CAN TO ENHANCE THEIR CHANCES OF OBTAINING PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE. AVINERI WILL HAVE THIS ISSUE VERY MUCH IN MIND IN HIS DISCUSSIONS.
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